

B-1 mod helps Dyess fight war on terror



By Staff Sgt. Zachary Wilson

(Left) Tech. Sgt. Wilbur Massie, 337th Test Evaluation Squadron, Tech. Sgt. Trey Munn, 7th Equipment Maintenance Squadron, (right) Airman Eric Sanchez, 7th EMS, all took part in developing the new modification on the B-1, currently in use at deployed locations.

By 1st Lt. Ben Gamble
Dyess Public Affairs

Dyess B-1s that deployed last month in support of operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom joined the global fight with a new piece of equipment.

A laptop-based computer system and monitor, mounted between the pilot and co-pilot seats, grants B-1 operators an enhanced view of the battlespace and reduces the likelihood of friendly-fire incidents.

"The monitor lets the pilots view what the offensive and defensive weapon systems officers are looking at for increased effectiveness in targeting," said Capt. Joe Delgado, 7th Equipment Maintenance Squadron. "The modification makes the B-1 more effective in targeting hostile forces while having more precision to avoid targeting friendly forces."

The modification offers a "bird's-eye" visual depiction of the battlespace with Global Positioning System accuracy. This allows for enhanced situational awareness for the crew members, Capt. Delgado said.

There have been plans in place to introduce this modification to the Air Force's B-1 fleet for years, said Capt. Steve Sturm, 7th Operations Support Squadron wing weapons officer. But installation of the equipment was initiated locally by Col. William Redmond, 7th Bomb Wing vice commander.

"(Colonel Redmond) felt the time was right to introduce Dyess B-1s to this great modification since we were about to deploy," Capt. Sturm said.

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"The old system got the job done, but it was like being in a NASCAR race with a horse and buggy. It just wasn't 21st century equipment."

"Something that usually takes years was implemented in about six to nine weeks," Capt. Sturm said. "It took a lot of over-time, but for us to have implemented this system so quickly is just phenomenal."

The process of installing the modification on Dyess B-1s was initiated Oct. 21 and successfully tested Dec. 6, Capt. Delgado said. The effort was a joint initiative between the 7th Weapons Squadron, 7th Maintenance Group, engineers at the B-1 system programs and weapons acquisition and integration offices at Air Combat Command headquarters at Langley Air Force Base, Va.

According to officials from the 337th Test and Evaluation Squadron, feedback from the modification will aid in development of a fleet-wide installation. The goal is to outfit all Air Force B-1s with the new equipment by May.